United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1228
17 September 1992

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Establishment of $1 billion Peace Endowment Fund and levy to United Nations on arms sales and international air travel among new proposals put forward by Secretary-General in his first report to General Assembly on work of Organization.

+ Secretary-General urges that all political parties now pledge to respect results of Angola's first-ever elections scheduled for 29 and 30 September, as verified by United Nations Angola Verification Mission.

+ United Nations Interim Office to open in Yerevan, Armenia, on 24 October, following agreement signed today at Headquarters.

+ Government of Sudan reaffirms commitment to principles of Operation Lifeline Sudan; United Nations to appoint Special Emissary to follow-up on agreement to increase humanitarian effort, rehabilitation and development.

* * *

The establishment of a Peace Endowment Fund of $1 billion to finance the initial cost of authorized peace-keeping operations, and a levy to the United Nations on arms sales and international air travel are among new proposals put forward by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his report to the General Assembly on the work of the Organization -- his first as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The proposals are presented in the face of the ever-deepening financial crisis of the United Nations -- now owed some $1.75 billion by Member States -- and to ensure that the Organization is fully prepared to respond to the new challenges of international action. The Secretary-General proposes that the Peace Endowment Fund be created by a combination of assessed and voluntary contributions from Governments, the private sector and individuals. The tax on arms sales, he writes, could be related to maintaining an arms register by the United Nations, and the tax on international air travel would be justified because air travel depends on the maintenance of peace.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The report also contains new proposals to authorize the United Nations to borrow from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and to allow a general tax exemption for contributions made to the United Nations by foundations, businesses and individuals.

The report also draws renewed attention to proposals put forward by previous Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, that interests be charged on the amounts of assessed contributions by Member States that are not paid on time, and that the Secretary-General be allowed to borrow commercially, should other sources of cash be inadequate.

The urgent question of ensuring financial security to the Organization over the long term has prompted the Secretary-General to ask a select group of qualified persons of high international repute to examine the entire subject and to report to him.

In his report, the Secretary-General also reviews the United Nations peace-keeping activites around the world. With regard to the operation in former Yugoslavia, the Secretary-General calls for a wider international effort in solving the crisis in that region. However, he cautions, "it must be realized that the expections of the international community...continue to exceed the resources and capacity of the United Nations Protection Force" (UNPROFOR) operating there. The situation in Somalia, he writes, "poses a particularly difficult challenge" to the United Nations, which faces the problems of irregular forces and non-governmental groups complicating the deliveries of food to the 6 million affected Somalis.

In a chapter devoted to human rights and development, Mr. Boutros-Ghali proposes that he -- as Secretary-General -- together with human rights bodies, be empowered to bring massive human rights violations to the attention of the Security Council, together with recommendation for action. Preventing violations before they occur is of primary importance, he notes, and the United Nations must be made able to identify situations which could degenerate into violations and to take preventive measures.
Document A/47/1

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has urged that all political parties now pledge themselves to respect the results of Angola's first-ever elections scheduled for 29 and 30 September, as verified by the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II).

In his further report on that Mission, dated 9 September, the Secretary-General also pointed out that although the United Nations, the three observers -- Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States -- and the donor countries had already played a key part in assisting implementation of the Peace Accords, there was still a need in the coming days to help further in the enormous task of deploying about 5,800 Angolan teams around the country to man the voting booths.

(more)

Appealing to the Angolan leaders to make sure that they continue to honour their commitments under the Peace Accords, the Secretary-General recalled that the duty to overcome difficulties lay primarily with the Angolans themselves and with their leaders. It was also essential, he wrote, that the safety of United Nations personnel and properties be guaranteed.

The Secretary-General further reported that the first of the three phases of the electoral process -- the registration of voters -- had ended with "results surpassing expectations". Nevertheless, concerns were raised that not every eligible voter might have had the opportunity to register, particularly in areas of difficult access, despite repeated appeals by the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Angola, Margaret Anstee.

The Secretary-General recalled that UNAVEM's mandate during the electoral campaign -- the second step of the electoral process -- was to observe the elections in a totally impartial and objective manner, not to supervise or organize them.

The planning and execution of the third and crucial phase of the process -- the actual voting -- presented a formidable challenge to the national electoral authorities and to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) team providing assistance. The Secretary- General stressed that "adequate logistical planning and support" were as important as "political commitment on all sides to ensure free and fair elections" and that no significant failure on the logistical front should be used "either as an excuse for shortcomings or as a pretext to query the results".
Document S/24556

* * *

A United Nations Interim Office is expected to open in Yerevan, Armenia, on 24 October, following an agreement signed today at Headquarters.

The action follows a decision last March by the Secretary-General to establish United Nations Interim Offices, with information and development components, in six countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States -- Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekhistan. Consequently, the first of the interim offices was opened in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, on 8 September.

In connection with the Secretary-General's decision and to enable the United Nations Interim Office to perform its functions in a full and effective manner, the Government of Armenia has agreed to ensure the availability of the necessary facilities, including the provision of office premises.

* * *

The Government of Sudan has reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of Operation Lifeline Sudan as a landmark in humanitarian assistance, according to a joint statement issued by the Government and the United Nations yesterday.

(more)

The statement was issued following a mission to the Sudan by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Eliasson, from 13 to 16 September. During his visit, Mr. Eliasson met with President Omer Hassan Ahmed El Bashir, who emphasized his country's desire to attain self-sufficiency in food. The President urged, however, that more developmental assistance be forthcoming.

According to the statement, the Sudanese Government and the United Nations have agreed that effective mechanisms be devised to provide prompt humanitarian assistance, including increased use of food from national production. The Government requested that the United Nations coordinate all relief assistance to populations in conflict-affected areas and offered the use of corridors for the prompt delivery and distribution of such assistance. Agreement was also reached to facilitate the voluntary return of Sudanese refugees and the voluntary repatriation of refugees from the neighbouring countries to the Sudan.

The United Nations will appoint a Special Emissary to follow-up with the Government and to ensure that timely assistance is provided to all those in need throughout the country.

* *** *